

Hover Flies

As their common name suggests, they are often seen hovering or nectaring at flowers; the adults of many species feed mainly on nectar and pollen, while the larvae eats a wide range of foods. In some species, the larvae eats decaying matter in the soil or in ponds and streams. In other species, the larvae are insectivores and prey on aphids, thrips, and other plant-sucking insects. Hover flies are one of the most useful natural enemies of plant pests; some species have been estimated to eat up to 1,200 aphids during the larval stage.

Many species of hover flies mimic bees or wasps in appearance. However, one can easily separate the hover flies from bees or wasps by their wings: flies have two wings and wasps and bees have four.

Hover flies can also be distinguished by looking at the head if it looks like a fly's head, then more than likely it is a fly. It is thought that this guise protects hover flies from falling prey to birds and other insectivores that avoid eating true wasps because of their sting.



Larvae

Favorite Plants of the Hover Fly:

Flowers in the daisy (Asteraceae) **and umbel (Apiaceae) families**. Syrphids also feed on nectar and pollen in a wide range of other plant families, including rose (Rosaceae), buckthorn (Rhamnaceae), borage (Boraginaceae), and willow (Salicaceae).

